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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between maternal employment status and the sex role concepts, cognitive development and adjustment of 110 nursery school children. It was predicted that maternal employment would be associated with a broadening of the children's sex role concepts. It was further predicted that there would be differential cognitive development depending on the sex of the child. There was evidence that children's sex role concepts were broader if their mothers were employed. The children's perceptions of their mothers were not related to the mother's employment status, but fathers were perceived more negatively by their sons if the mother was employed. Sons of employed mothers had lower IQ scores than either daughters of employed mothers or children with nonemployed mothers. Children with employed mothers received better adjustment ratings from their teachers and were described somewhat more favorably by their parents. Parental data were obtained from 83 sets of parents. There were some significant associations between the children's and parents' measures. The parents' behavior and attitudes varied with the mother's employment status and the sex of the child. (Author/MS)

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RELATIONS BETWEEN MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN*

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Running Head: Relations between maternal employment.

Abstract

This study examined the relations between maternal employment status and 110 nursery school children's sex role concepts, cognitive development and adjustment. It was predicted that maternal employment would be associated with a broadening of the children's sex role concepts. It was further predicted that there would be differential cognitive development depending on the sex of the child. There was evidence that children's sex role concepts were broader if their mothers were employed. The children's perceptions of their mothers were not related to their employment status, but fathers were perceived more negatively by their sons if the mother was employed. Sons of employed mothers had lower IQ scores than either daughters of employed mothers or children with nonemployed mothers. Children with employed mothers received better adjustment ratings from their teachers and were described somewhat more favourably by their parents. Parental data were obtained from 83 sets of parents. There were some significant associations between the children's and parents' measures. The parents' behaviour and attitudes varied with the mother's employment status and the sex of the child.

RELATIONS BETWEEN MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN

Recent literature reviews on the influence of maternal employment on children's development have cited a number of factors as important in causing maternal employment to have differential effects on children instead of a pervasive general effect. One of these factors is the sex of the child, with the sons of employed mothers having more difficulties (Hoffman, 1974), especially in the area of sex identity (Poznanski, Maxey, and Marsden, 1970). The social class of the family (Wallston, 1973) and the attitudes and motivation of the mother (Etaugh, 1974; Hoffman, 1974) are other important factors. It has also been noted that there is both a need for research on young children and a need for theory in the current research (Hoffman, 1974).

This study is an attempt to fill partially this need by examining the relations among the variables of maternal employment status, sex of child, parental attitudes, and the development of the nursery school child of middle socioeconomic class background. Based upon Lynn's (1969) theory of sex role identification, it is possible to develop hypotheses of how full time maternal employment relates to the sex role development of girls and boys and the ramifications of these relations on other areas of development. Lynn has argued that

since mothers are the main caretakers of children, the processes and models of sex role identification for young boys and girls differ and lead to the development of different cognitive abilities and personality characteristics in boys and girls. The constant presence of mothers makes sex role identification easier for girls, who identify simply by imitating their mothers. Consequently, the identification process requires and develops less problem solving skills and less initiative and independence in girls. In addition, the traditional female model does not emphasize intellectual achievement and independence, and so these characteristics are not made salient to girls. The situation is different for boys. Since fathers have much less contact with their children than do mothers, boys also initially identify with their mothers and then must transfer their identification to a male role, a role exemplified by usually absent fathers. The achieving of this transfer leads boys to make a polarization of sex roles, with male roles becoming valued positively and female roles, negatively. The successful solution of this problem of sex role identification requires and helps develop problem solving skills in the young boy, (Lynn, 1969).

Employed mothers change both the models and processes of sex role identification and these changes have different effects on

children of different sex and background. The process of sex role identification for girls in homes with employed mothers becomes somewhat more akin to the process usually experienced by boys. The employed mothers present a more active and independent model engaged in a broader range of activities than the traditional housewife model. The mothers necessarily have less physical proximity to their children, which might also lead to the greater mother-daughter distance that is associated with better cognitive abilities in daughters (Lynn, 1969). Therefore, daughters of employed mothers compared to daughters of nonemployed mothers should have less traditionally feminine views of their own roles and of sex roles in general, and should also have enhanced cognitive abilities. However, the effects of maternal employment on the daughters' sex identification process should be mitigated by the fact that the substitute care givers are almost invariably female and by the fact that most employed mothers still spend a great deal of time with and assume major responsibility for the children (Epstein, 1971).

Maternal employment makes the problem of achieving sex role identification for sons more difficult to solve. Mothers' jobs raise their status, reduce the status of the fathers relative to the mothers, make the two roles more indistinguishable, and so hinder

the usual polarization of sex roles by boys. The increased difficulty of solving the identification problem for sons of employed mothers should lower their development of cognitive skills compared to sons of nonemployed mothers. However, if the husbands of employed mothers become more involved in child care activity, the greater contact with male models should lessen the problem of the sons' sex role identification. Father-son activity should therefore be positively associated with the sons' masculine identity and cognitive development.

The greater role similarity of the parents associated with maternal employment leads both sons and daughters to have broader conceptions of their own sex roles than children with nonemployed mothers. This is beneficial for daughters, but it does not appear to be so for sons at this early stage in their development. The benefit for daughters stems from their being able to expand their sex role, which is solidly based upon contact with their mothers and other females, by adopting characteristics considered masculine and of greater social prestige (Rosenkrantz, et al., 1968). The disadvantage for sons of the greater parental role similarity is due to their not having the same sex parent and other male models as available to them as do daughters and therefore not having as immediate and direct a way of establishing their sex identity. The greater

flexibility of sex roles then increases the sons' difficulty in differentiating their roles from that of the less socially prestigious female role . The sons of employed mothers do not benefit from the clearly distinguished and superior status of the male to the same extent as do sons of nonemployed mothers.

The hypothesis that full time maternal employment leads nursery aged children to a broader conception of sex roles which is associated with enhanced cognitive abilities in daughters, but poorer cognitive development in sons, was tested in this study. Nursery aged children were used since this is the age when children form initial sex role concepts that can be verbalized. The children's adjustment at home and school was also examined to determine if relations with maternal employment status exist. The mothers' and fathers' attitudes, behaviours, child care arrangements, and work history were examined to see how such factors related to the children's development.

Method

Subjects

There were 110 children from nine nursery schools in this study. The children comprised four groups according to their

sex and the employment status of the mothers, with 22 sons of employed mothers, 30 daughters of employed mothers, 26 sons of nonemployed mothers, and 32 daughters of nonemployed mothers participating. The children's ages ranged from 3 years 6 months to 4 years 10 months, with a mean age of 4.29, s.d. = .49. All children came from two parent families where no parental death or divorce had occurred. Nonemployed mothers had had no paid employment since the child was born; employed mothers worked at a full time job on an uninterrupted basis. The children all came from middle class homes, with the average family rating being 2.26, s.d. = .46, on the Blishen scale (1967). The four groups of children did not differ in their mean length of time in nursery school. The mean for the whole sample was 1.27 years, s.d. = .63. The children with employed mothers had significantly fewer siblings, with 33% of them being only children, while none of the children with nonemployed mothers were only children, F (1,106) = 20.17, $p < .0001$.

Eighty-three pairs of parents cooperated in the study, with 19 fathers and employed mothers of sons, 25 fathers and employed mothers of daughters, 19 fathers and nonemployed mothers of sons, and 20 fathers and nonemployed mothers of daughters participating. The mean age of the mothers was 30.55, s.d. = 3.93 and that of the fathers, 33.83, s.d. = 4.90. The mean number of years of education of the mothers was 13.68, s.d. = 1.99 and that of the fathers, 14.35, s.d. = 2.71. The mean number of years of employment for the mothers was 4.54, s.d. = 3.06, with the range extending from 12 years to 10 months of

full time work. There was no significant difference between the length of time the mothers of sons and daughters had been employed.

Procedure

With the cooperation of the nursery schools, letters informing parents of the study were sent home with permission slips to be signed and returned. Of the parents contacted, 54% granted permission to test their children. These children were individually tested in the nursery school by a research assistant who did not know the hypotheses of the study. The parents were sent anonymous, coded questionnaires to complete and mail back to the university and 75% did so. The teachers most familiar with an individual child completed a behaviour rating scale assessing the child's adjustment in the school. The rating scale was one used by the Early Childhood Education Programme at Concordia University (Jacobs, 1973).

The children were individually tested in two sessions at the school. The tests used were chosen to assess the children's sex role orientation and concepts, their perceptions of their parents, and their cognitive development. The IT Scale for Children (Brown, 1956) and the person from the moon question (Hartley, 1960) were used to assess the child's sex role orientation and ideas of the

activities and knowledge appropriate for males and females. The Kagan & Lemkin method (1960), which uses cartoon drawings and questions about the parents depicted in the cartoons and the children's own parents, was used to examine the children's views of their parents. The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (Wechsler, 1949) was used to assess the child's cognitive development on the assumption that poorer problem solving behavior would be reflected in lower general intelligence scores.

The mothers and fathers were given individual test booklets which assessed their motivation and satisfaction with their roles, their sex role concepts, and their child care attitudes. The booklets included a brief history section ascertaining relevant information about the family, work and education of the mother and father, and child care arrangements. This last section was based upon the questionnaire used by Woods (1968, 1972). Mothers completed a questionnaire which assessed their motivations for either being employed or nonemployed and their satisfaction with their roles, and a questionnaire assessing the fathers' involvement and interaction with the children. Fathers completed parallel questionnaires assessing their own satisfaction in having an employed or nonemployed wife and their estimate of their own involvement and shared activities with the children. These questionnaires were developed through pilot work done

in 1972 and 1973.

Both parents completed adjective checklists describing their children and a problem section in which they indicated what types of problems they were having with their children. They also completed the Parental Role Differentiation Scale (Lambert, 1969) which measures how similarly husbands and wives behave at home. Four areas of behaviour were sampled: functions, examining how the husbands and wives perform various kinds of domestic tasks; discipline, examining how they exercise authority and control over the children; socio-emotional activities, examining how they perform supportive and expressive activities with the children; and power, examining how they make family household decisions. Both the fathers and mothers completed the Attitudes towards Feminism Belief Patterns Scale (Kirkpatrick, 1967) and The Revised Child Behaviour Inventory by Hurley & Hohn (1971). This last scale measures parental tendencies towards overprotecting, rejecting or putting pressure to achieve on the children.

Results

Children's Measures.

Measures Pertaining to Sex Role Concepts

The IT Scale for Children (ITSC) test data were analyzed

separately for girls and boys. The prediction that girls with employed mothers should have a broader conception of their roles with consequently less feminine scores than girls with nonemployed mothers receives some support, t (60) = 1.39, p = .09 (one tailed test). Similarly, there is some evidence that boys with employed mothers have broader conceptions of their roles, expressing less of a preference for masculine activities than boys with nonemployed mothers, t (46) = 1.67, p = .05 (one tailed test).

As an additional measure of their conceptions of sex roles, the children were asked how they would describe appropriate activities for girls, boys, women and men to visitors from the moon. The number of responses were submitted to four 2 x 2 (sex of child X maternal employment status) analyses of variance (Table 1). The ANOVA for responses given to the category girls, yielded a significant main effect for maternal employment status and a significant interaction effect between sex of the child and employment status of the mother; F (1,106) = 4.37, $p < .05$, and F (1,106) = 14.46, $p < .001$ respectively. The Scheffé test indicates that the daughters of employed mothers give significantly more responses for girls than do the sons of employed mothers or daughters with nonemployed mothers, $p < .05$. The ANOVA for responses given to the category boys, yielded a significant effect for the interaction between the sex of the child

and the employment status of the mother; F (1,106) = 13.41, $p < .001$ with daughters of employed mothers and sons of nonemployed mothers giving more responses than daughters of nonemployed mothers, Scheffé, $p < .05$. The same interaction approaches significance for the number of responses for the category women, F (1,106) = 2.87, $p = .10$.

Insert Table 1 here

Examination of the types of responses given indicates that all four groups give similar patterns of responses for girls and for boys, with play activities being predominant. Furthermore, all four groups give similar patterns of responses for men with work activities being predominant. However, more girls cite work and job activities as appropriate for women than do boys, X^2 (1) = 17.36, $p < .001$. The employment status of the mothers is not related to the types of children's response given, X^2 (1) = 2.65, p is not significant.

The children's perceptions of their parents, their closest sex role models, were examined to see if they varied with maternal employment status. The child was required to specify one parent as the main actor in situations described in cartoons and in their own families (Kagan & Lemkin, 1960). The items were grouped into three categories: those in which parents showed affection, punitiveness,

or competence. Two way analyses of variance were performed on the total number of choices that each parent received for each area. The most important variable related to the children's choice of parent was the sex of the child. The only area related to the employment status of the mother was that of punitiveness, F (1,106) = 7.59, $p < .01$ (Table 1). The sons of employed mothers describe the father as more punitive than the children with nonemployed mothers, Scheffé, $p < .05$. The children's perceptions of their mothers are not related to the mothers' job status.

Intelligence Test Results

The Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI) scores were submitted to two way analyses of variance. Only the WPPSI scores for children at or above the lowest WPPSI age norm of 3 years, 10 months were used in the data analysis of IQ scores. As seen in Table 2, the factor of maternal employment status significantly relates to performance and full scale IQ scores, F (1,96) = 7.75, $p < .01$ and F (1,96) = 7.73, $p < .01$, respectively, and approaches significance for the verbal IQ scores, F (1,96) = 2.76, $p = .10$. The sex of the child and the interaction between the sex of the child and the employment status of the mother approach significance for the full scale score analysis, F (1,96) = 3.59, $p = .06$ and F (1,96) =

3.16, $p = .07$ respectively. The Scheffé test indicates that the boys with employed mothers are significantly lower on full scale IQ scores than the other three groups, $p < .05$, and lower on performance scores than the children of nonemployed mothers, $p < .05$ (Table 3).

Insert Tables 2 & 3 here

The performance of the boys with employed mothers is also uniformly poorest on all but two of the WPPSI subtests. These data provide support for the hypothesis that maternal employment is associated with poorer cognitive development for boys, but do not support the prediction that it would also be associated with better cognitive development for girls.

Teachers' Ratings of Children's Adjustment

Ratings of the children's behaviour in school were obtained for 105 children. Separate 2 x 2 analyses of variance were performed on each of the 40 items of the Behaviour Rating Scale (BRS) (Tables 4 and 5). Significant differences between the groups at the $p < .05$ level or better were found on 21 of the 40 items, 13 being associated with the sex of the child, eight associated with the employment status of the mother, and two associated with the interaction of the two variables. The items in which only sex differences occurred will not be discussed here. These items consistently indicate that the

girls are described as better adjusted to the nursery environment.

As shown in Table 6, the nine items which differentiate between the children with employed and nonemployed mothers all indicate that the children with employed mothers are described as better adjusted in the nursery. This pattern of results was obtained among all the nursery samples. The children with employed mothers are rated as getting along more favorably with other children and as being more self-sufficient and independent. The sons of nonemployed mothers tend to receive the worst ratings.

Insert Table 4, 5, 6, here

Relations among the Children's Measures

Table 7 gives the coefficients for the intercorrelations among the children's measures for the four groups. The findings that there is a significant positive correlation between a masculine orientation on the ITSC scale and age of sons of nonemployed mothers but not for sons of employed mothers provides additional support for the hypothesis that maternal employment hinders the usual course of sex role development for sons. The inverse correlation between full scale IQ scores and masculine orientation on the ITSC scale for boys with employed mothers also supports the contention that maternal employment alters the usual relation between sex role development and cognitive development in sons. No significant association between

these variables exists for the boys with nonemployed mothers. A significant negative correlation between the age and IQ scores of the sons of employed mothers is also noteworthy.

Insert Table 7 here

It is also apparent from Table 7 that the better adjustment ratings of the boys with employed mothers can not be explained by their more feminine orientations as indicated on the ITSC, since there is no significant association between BRS and ITSC scores for any of the four groups.

There is one interesting finding in the data for girls. An association between feminine scores on the ITSC and higher IQ scores exists for the daughters of nonemployed mothers as opposed to the lack of a relation between the two for daughters of employed mothers.

Parental Measures Concerning the Children & Child Care Arrangements

The mothers completed the child care arrangement section indicating who supervised the child during different periods of the day. As expected for children of this age and family background, no children were unsupervised. Futhermore, no mothers reported difficulty in maintaining stable substitute supervision. As also expected, the employed mothers report a much greater use of substitute supervisors

than the nonemployed mothers. The only finding of interest in this section was that all the employed mothers indicated that they and their husbands supervise their children in the evening and weekends. Most of the nonemployed mothers indicate that only they themselves supervise the children in the same time period, $\underline{X}^2$ (1) = 34.81, $p < .0001$.

More employed mothers describe their children favourably on the 28 item adjective checklist than do the nonemployed mothers. However, the $\underline{X}^2$ method of comparing and testing the differences between proportions from different samples (Fleiss, 1973) indicates that the only adjectives that significantly differentiate between the groups were pleasant, $\underline{X}$ (3) = 13.53, $p < .005$, and having a good sense of humor, $\underline{X}^2$ (3) = 14.26, $p < .005$, with more employed mothers of girls giving favourable descriptions than the other three groups.

The fathers' descriptions of their children are in agreement with those of their wives. More fathers with nonemployed wives describe their daughters as dependent, $\underline{X}^2$ (3) = 9.61, $p < .025$, than the other three groups. More fathers with employed wives describe their daughters as mature for their age, $\underline{X}^2$ (3) = 9.70, $p < .025$, than the other three groups. There are two instances in which the children with employed mothers receive the less favourable rating. One is that more fathers whose wives are employed describe their sons as aggressive, however, this finding is not statistically significant, $\underline{X}^2$ (3) = 6.36, $p = .10$. More daughters of employed mothers and sons of

nonemployed mothers receive ratings of pleasant from their fathers, $\underline{X}^2$ (3) = 12.12, p < .01. The employment status of the mothers is not related to the way they or their husbands describe the amount and kind of problems they have with their children.

Child Care Attitudes

The ANOVA for the overprotection scores of the mothers on the Revised Child Behaviour Inventory reveals significant effects for the variables of maternal employment status and the sex of the child $\underline{F}$ (1,79) = 4.68, p < .05 and $\underline{F}$ (1,79) = 4.33, p < .05 respectively (Table 8). The employed mothers and mothers of girls overprotect more. The nonemployed mothers of sons are significantly less overprotective than the other three groups, Scheffé, p < .05. The sex of the child and the interaction between the sex of the child and maternal employment status are related to the father's scores, $\underline{F}$ (1, 79) = 4.87, p < .025 and $\underline{F}$ (1,79) = 7.37, p < .01 respectively (Table 8). The husbands of employed wives do not differentiate between sons and daughters while the husbands of nonemployed wives overprotect daughters more and sons, less, Scheffé, p < .05. The Revised Child Behaviour Inventory does not differentiate among the groups on two scales, manifest rejection and achievement pressure.

Insert Table 8 here

Parental Role Motivation, Behaviour & Attitudes

The rest of the parental measures pertain to the parents' own attitudes and behaviour. The employed mothers report themselves as significantly more satisfied with their role, F (1,79) = 48.29, $p < .0001$ than the nonemployed mothers are with theirs (Table 9). The interaction between the sex of child and maternal employment status approaches significance F (1,79) = 3.21, $p = .07$, with the employed mothers of sons being most satisfied and the nonemployed mothers of sons being least satisfied. Most of the nonemployed mothers report that they will seek employment when their children are older, a factor which adds to their much lower role satisfaction scores. The fathers' results are similar, with the husbands of employed wives indicating more satisfaction with their wives' roles, F (1,79) = 21.24, $p < .0001$ (Table 9). Similarly, the fathers of girls express somewhat more satisfaction with their wives' roles, F (1,79) = 3.68, $p = .055$, than do the fathers of boys, with the difference being significant for the nonemployed mothers, Scheffé, $p < .05$.

The mothers' assessment of their husbands' interaction with their children is not influenced by maternal employment status or sex of the child. Maternal job status is related to the fathers' assessment of their own interaction with their children, F (1,79)

= 9.73, $p < .01$ (Table 9) with the husbands of employed wives who have daughters claiming greater participation in activities with their children than the other fathers of daughters, Scheffé, $p < .05$. The four groups of mothers all evaluate their husbands relations with the children more highly than do the husbands' themselves.

Insert Table 9 here

The Parental Role Differentiation (PRD) scores for mothers indicate that maternal employment is associated with perceiving themselves and their husbands as behaving in a more similar manner in family and domestic activities than do the nonemployed mothers. The variable of the employment status of the mother yielded significant effects on the ANOVAS for PRD discipline and socioemotional activities F (1,79) = 5.82, $p < .025$ F (1,79) = 5.40, $p < .025$, while approaching significance on the ANOVAS for PRD functions and power, F (1,79) = 3.41, $p = .07$ and F (1,79) = 3.18, $p = .07$, respectively (Table 10). The interaction between the sex of the child and maternal employment status is related to the mothers' PRD scores, F (1,79) = 4.60, $p < .05$; F (1,79) = 4.20, $p < .05$; F (1,79) = 4.52, $p < .05$ on functions, discipline, and power. The mothers display a consistent pattern of scores on the PRD scales with the nonemployed mothers of girls indicating the most differentiation between their own and their husbands'

behaviour and differing significantly from the employed mothers of girls, Scheffé, $p < .05$, who indicate the most similarity in their own and their husbands' behaviour. The employed mothers and nonemployed mothers of boys do not differ significantly.

Only maternal employment is associated with the fathers' PRD scores, F (1,79) = 5.87, $p < .025$; F (1,79) = 4.49, $p < .05$; F (1,79) = 4.48, $p < .05$; F (1,79) = 3.84, $p < .05$, for functions, discipline, socio-emotional activities and power respectively (Table 11). Similar to the mothers' results, the fathers of girls differentiate significantly less in their behaviour on PRD functions, discipline and socioemotional activities, Scheffé, $p < .05$, when their wives are employed. The fathers of boys are not influenced in their behaviour by their wives' employment status. Examination of the PRD scores indicates that the decreases in differentiation of parental behaviour when the mothers are employed are caused by the fathers' participating more actively. However, the mothers and fathers report that the mothers continue to be more active in domestic and family activity.

Insert Table 10 & 11 here

While the PRD scale measures the extent to which the parents function in an egalitarian fashion in the home, the feminism scale measures their attitudes towards beliefs in sex role equality in general. Most parents in all four groups tend to favour egalitarian attitudes with the mothers having the more favourable attitudes.

Maternal employment status is not associated with either the mothers' or the fathers' scores, however, the interaction between the sex of the child and maternal employment status relates significantly to the fathers' scores, F (1,79) = 9.14, $p < .01$ (Table 12). Consistent with their PRD scale results, the fathers with employed wives are more liberal if they have daughters and differ significantly from the fathers with nonemployed wives who have daughters, Scheffé, $p < .05$. The results of the parents' measures indicate that both the variables of maternal employment status and the sex of the child differentiate among the parents' reported behaviour and attitudes.

Insert Table 12 here

Relations Between Child and Parental Measures

As Tables 13 and 14 reveal, there are few significant correlations between the measures of parents and children. Most of the significant coefficients are found for the associations between the measures of the daughters of employed mothers and their parents, and the intelligence scores of sons of employed mothers and their parents. It is also apparent from Tables 13 and 14, that the relations between the children's and fathers' data are at least as strong as those between the children's and mothers' data.

Insert Tables 13 & 14 here

The parental characteristics of age and education do not correlate significantly with the boys' measures. For both groups of girls, higher paternal education is significantly associated with higher femininity scores.

Only the IQ scores of the sons of employed mothers are significantly associated with parental measures. Both maternal and paternal feminism scores are positively associated with the sons' intelligence scores. In addition, the more satisfied the fathers are with their wives' roles, the brighter the sons. The fathers' activities with their sons and their participation in child care and domestic tasks do not relate significantly to the sons' sex role or cognitive measures. Maternal achievement pressure scores are negatively associated with the sons' IQ scores.

The measures of sex role orientation, intelligence and behaviour ratings for daughters with employed mothers are all significantly associated with parental measures. Length of maternal employment, paternal education, parental similarity in discipline, and paternal happiness with the mothers' role, all relate positively to feminine sex orientation scores. The intelligence scores of the daughters with employed mothers relate negatively to parental scores of manifest

rejection and achievement pressure, but the relation is significant only in the case of maternal rejection scores The nursery school teachers' ratings of the behaviour in school of the daughters of employed mothers are negatively associated with certain parental characteristics and attitudes. The older the mothers, the longer the mothers have been employed, and the more the fathers reject or put pressure on their daughters to achieve, the more poorly the teachers rate the daughters' behaviour. On the other hand, the more feminist the orientation of the fathers, the more positively the daughters are rated by the teachers.

Discussion

The results of this study support the hypothesis that the development of gender orientation and sex role concepts of children varies with the employment or nonemployment of their mothers. Both sons and daughters of employed mothers show less of a same sex role preference. The daughters of employed mothers also conceive of more activities as suitable for girls. It has been reported earlier that the daughters of employed mothers have broader sex role concepts (Hoffman, 1974; Miller, 1975), both at the preschool age and at older age levels. It has also been reported (McCord et.al., 1963) that adolescent boys with employed mothers have some sex identity problems. The findings that the fathers with working wives are seen

more negatively by their sons and that the fathers do not report greater involvement with their sons, indicates that generally these fathers do not become more positive models that facilitate the boys' sex role identification process when the mothers are employed. A more negative view of fathers held by older sons with employed mothers (Propper, 1972), also suggests that sons experience more difficulty in adopting sex roles if their mothers are employed.

The results of this study suggest that sex role development of sons of employed mothers is affected at a very early age and that this is turn relates to the sons' cognitive development. Masculine orientation declines with greater IQ and fails to increase with age in boys with employed mothers. This contrasts with the results for boys with nonemployed mothers and previous reports of increases of masculine choices by boys with greater age and intelligence (Kohlberg & Zigler, 1967). The unusual relations between age, intelligence and sex orientation for sons of employed mothers supports Lynn's (1969) hypothesis that difficulties for boys in achieving sex role identification will be reflected in poorer cognitive performance. A previous finding of lower IQ scores for adolescent sons of employed mothers has been reported by Rees and Palmer (1970). This finding also supports the link between maternal employment and poorer cognitive performance in sons. Unlike the results in this study,

however, Rees and Palmer's data also showed higher intelligence scores for older daughters of employed mothers. The work history of the mothers was not reported by Rees and Palmer, and it is therefore impossible to assess how comparable the studies are. Contrary to the hypothesis, the daughters of employed mothers in this study showed lower performance and full scale IQ scores than the daughters of non-employed mothers, though the differences were small and not statistically significant. IQ scores correlated positively with feminine scores on the ITSC for daughters with nonemployed mothers. These results are similar to the results found by Kohlberg and Zigler (1967) for preschool girls, although the relation became reversed for slightly older girls. No relations between sex role orientation and intelligence was found for the daughters of employed mothers. The interpretation of these results is not clear. It is possible that having an employed mother hastens the loss of the association between feminine orientation and intelligence in daughters.

The children of employed mothers are described more favourably by their teachers and to a certain extent by their parents. The better adjustment of these children could be caused by their being more used to being supervised by people other than their parents, which helps them adapt to a school setting more easily. Moore (1963) reached a similar conclusion, namely, that in favourable circumstances young

children with employed mothers may benefit from receiving part time stable substitute care by achieving greater independence compared to children constantly cared for by their nonemployed mothers.

Parental behaviour and attitudes are involved in mediating the effects of maternal employment status on children. Both employed mothers and their husbands are more content with the mothers' roles and both have similar protective attitudes to sons and daughters. However, maternal employment combined with having a daughter is associated with many more changes in parental behaviour and attitudes than is maternal employment associated with having a son. Fathers and employed mothers of daughters both describe their behaviour at home and in dealing with their children significantly more similarly than do fathers and nonemployed mothers of daughters. Fathers and employed mothers of sons do not differ from fathers and nonemployed mothers of sons. Fathers who have employed wives and daughters also report more involvement with their children and more feminist attitudes than do fathers who have nonemployed wives and daughters. Fathers who have employed wives and sons do not report greater involvement with their children than do fathers who have nonemployed wives and sons.

The finding that the group that has the lowest IQ scores, the sons of employed mothers, also has the greatest associations between intelligence and parental attitudes indicates that these attitudes are important in mediating the effects of the mothers' employment

on the sons' cognitive development. Those families in which the parents do not favor sex role equality, in which the fathers are unhappy with their wives' roles, and in which the mothers place pressure on the sons to achieve, are those that have sons with the lowest IQ scores.

The fact that there are no significant differences in feminist attitudes or in parental behaviour in family situations between the fathers and employed mothers of sons compared to the fathers and non-employed mothers of sons, suggests that the implications of the mothers' job status have not really been accepted by these parents. Though they are happy with the mothers' employment, they do not see it in a context of greater sex role equality, nor has it made their behaviour less sex stereotyped at home. It might have been expected that maintaining the traditional sex distinctions in homes where the mothers are employed would be advantageous for the sons' development, but the implications of the findings are otherwise. Paternal as well as maternal acceptance of similar sex roles would reduce the difficulties for sons of employed mothers in developing their sex roles and reduces the associated relative cognitive impairment. Counter to the hypothesis of the study, there is no association between father-son activity and the sons' sex role or cognitive scores for this group, in which the fathers are generally not more involved with their sons.

However, in those families where there is acceptance of egalitarian sex role attitudes and behaviour by the parents, the fathers might provide the sons with more contact with a male model and also reduce the sons' anxiety over differentiating between male and female roles. An examination of the intercorrelations of the fathers' measures reveals significant associations between high feminism scores and greater activity of the father in the child rearing functions of the PRD discipline and socioemotional scales, r (17) = -.45, $p < .05$; r (17) = -.48, $p < .05$ respectively, for the husbands of employed mothers of sons. The results, therefore, suggest that although maternal employment is associated with lower IQ scores in sons, when the fathers of the sons have feminist attitudes they participate more in child rearing activities and have brighter sons. Whether the difficulties for sons of employed mothers would be completely eliminated by more egalitarian attitudes and greater participation in child rearing activities by the father is not known.

The design of this study does not allow us to determine if the cognitive difficulties of sons associated with maternal employment are long lasting or whether the boys can overcome their initial slower development. Only a longitudinal study can answer that question. However, it is possible to predict that if our society becomes more egalitarian in both behaviour and attitudes, with more mothers becoming employed and more fathers becoming more involved with child

care, then having an employed mother should have fewer effects on children in as much as sex roles should become more similar. In that future society, having very distinct sex roles of unequal status enacted for children by the mother and father should not be advantageous for sons.

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Table 1

Analysis of Variance: Person from the Moon Categories

Category: Girls

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	8.00	4.37**
Sex of Child (S)	1	1.58	.86
E X S	1	26.47	14.46****
Error	106	1.83	

Category: Boys

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	4.17	2.41
Sex of Child (S)	1	4.77	2.74
E X S	1	23.20	13.41****
Error	106	1.73	

Category: Women

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	1.77	1.17
Sex of Child (S)	1	.50	.33
E X S	1	4.34	2.87*
Error	106	1.51	

Analysis of Variance: Parent Perception

Category: Fathers' Punitiveness

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	43.58	7.59***
Sex of Child (S)	1	9.54	1.66
E X S	1	1.62	.28
Error	106	5.74	

*p < .10 ***p < .01
**p < .05 ****p < .001

Table 2

Analysis of Variance: WPPSI Full Scale IQ Scores

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	1054.90	7.73***
Sex of Child (S)	1	491.20	3.59*
E X S	1	431.97	3.16*
Error	96	136.49	

WPPSI: Verbal IQ Scores

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	479.28	2.76*
Sex of Child (S)	1	465.91	2.68
E X S	1	440.74	2.54
Error	96	173.41	

WPPSI: Performance IQ Scores

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	1173.24	7.75***
Sex of Child (S)	1	317.85	2.10
E X S	1	198.38	1.31
Error	96	151.48	

* $p < .10$ *** $p < .01$

** $p < .05$ **** $p < .001$

Table 3

I.Q. Scores for the Children's Groups

	Sons of employed mothers	Daughters of employed mothers	Sons of nonemployed mothers	Daughters of nonemployed mothers
	n = 20	27	26	27
Verbal I.Q.	105.55	114.56	114.62	114.75
Performance I.Q.	106.61	113.36	116.83	117.62*
Full Scale I.Q.	106.27	115.36	117.54	117.83

* Means underlined by the same line do not differ significantly, Scheffé test $p < .05$

Table 4

Analysis of Variance: Behaviour Rating Scale, Item 1[a]

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	4.01	6.82***
Sex of Child (S)	1	.83	1.41
E X S	1	.58	.99
Error	101	.58	

Item 2

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	2.60	3.93**
Sex of Child (S)	1	2.08	3.15*
E X S	1	.01	.01
Error	101	.66	

Item 3

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	2.98	4.96**
Sex of Child (S)	1	3.58	5.96**
E X S	1	.01	.01
Error	101	.60	

Item 4

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	6.70	7.18***
Sex of Child (S)	1	1.41	1.51
E X S	1	3.21	3.43*
Error	101	.93	

*p $<$ .10 ***p $<$ .01
**p $<$ .05 ****p $<$ .001

[a]To identify the items, see table 6

Table 5

Analysis of Variance: Behaviour Rating Scale, Item 5

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	3.82	6.11***
Sex of Child (S)	1	1.87	2.99*
E X S	1	2.26	3.61*
Error	101	.62	

Item 6

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	3.41	5.97**
Sex of Child (S)	1	.56	.98
E X S	1	1.74	3.05*
Error	101	.57	

Item 7

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	7.76	10.35***
Sex of Child (E)	1	1.62	2.17
E X S	1	3.04	4.06**
Error	101	.75	

Item 8

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	6.88	7.02***
Sex of Child (S)	1	1.32	1.35
E X S	1	.57	.59
Error	101	.98	

Item 9

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	2.08	2.82*
Sex of Child (S)	1	.05	.07
E X S	1	5.20	7.06***
Error	101	.73	

*p < .10 ***p < .01
**p < .05 ****p < .10

Table 6

Mean Behaviour Ratings for Children on Significant Items

Item				
1. Children play with child	4.3[a]	4.3	4.1	3.8[b]
	group 2[c]	group 1	group 4	group 3
2. Child friendly with others	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.6
	group 2	group 1	group 4	group 3
3. Child co-operates with others	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.1
	group 2	group 4	group 1	group 3
4. Child dominated by others	4.3	3.7	3.6	3.4
	group 1	group 2	group 3	group 4
5. Child gives ideas to others	2.7	2.1	2.0	2.0
	group 2	group 1	group 4	group 3
6. Child needs others to initiate activities	4.5	4.1	4.0	3.9
	group 1	group 2	group 4	group 3
7. Child has difficulty without direction	4.3	4.2	4.0	3.4
	group 1	group 2	group 4	group 3
8. Child responsible in personal care	3.3	3.2	2.9	2.5
	group 1	group 2	group 3	group 4
9. Child spends time aimlessly	4.5	4.1	4.0	3.7
	group 1	group 4	group 2	group 3

[a]The means have been adjusted so that a higher score reflects a more favorable response.

[b]Means underlined by the same line do not differ significantly, Scheffé p < .05.

[c]Group 1 = sons of employed mothers

Group 2 = daughters of employed mothers

Group 3 = sons of nonemployed mothers

Group 4 = daughters of nonemployed mothers

Table 7

Correlation Coefficients Showing The Relations among Children's Measures

Variable Pairs Correlated	Boys with employed mothers	Girls with employed mothers	Boys with nonemployed mothers	Girls with nonemployed mothers
	n = 20	27	26	27
ITSC[a] & FSIQ	-.44*	-.04	.05	-.38*
ITSC & BRS	-.05	-.15	.20	-.04
ITSC & Child's age	.17	-.19	.49**	-.02
FSIQ & BRS	-.10	.38*	-.05	.32
FSIQ & child's age	-.51*	-.30	.19	-.36
BRS & child's age	.16	-.16	.01	-.23

**$p < .01$

*$p < .05$

[a]High scores on the ITSC indicate masculine choices; low scores, feminine choices.

Table 8

Analysis of Variance: Revised Child Behaviour Inventory

Overprotection Scores for Mothers

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	217.38	4.68**
Sex of Child (S)	1	201.21	4.33**
E X S	1	72.34	1.55
Error	79	46.41	

Overprotection Scores for Fathers

Source of Variance			
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	3.62	.08
Sex of Child (S)	1	208.76	4.87**
E X S	1	315.77	7.37***
Error	79	42.80	

*p $<$ .10

**p $<$ .05

***p $<$ .01

****p $<$ .001

Table 9

Analysis of Variance: Mothers' Scores for Role Satisfaction

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	4189.47	48.29****
Sex of Child (S)	1	121.10	1.40
E X S	1	278.66	3.21*
Error	79	86.74	

Fathers' Scores for Satisfaction with Wife's Role

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	691.20	21.24***
Sex of Child (S)	1	120.00	3.68*
E X S	1	60.81	1.86
Error	79	32.53	

Fathers' Scores for Own Family Involvement

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	49.38	9.73***
Sex of Child (S)	1	.05	.01
E X S	1	9.64	1.90
Error	79	5.07	

*p $<$ .10
**p $<$ .05
***p $<$ .01
****p $<$ .001

Table 10

Analysis of Variance - Parental Role Differentiation Scores for Mothers

PRD Functions

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	651.55	3.41*
Sex of Child (S)	1	22.60	.11
E X S	1	878.07	4.60**
Error	79	190.71	

PRD Discipline

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	742.78	5.82**
Sex of Child (S)	1	.06	.01
E X S	1	535.80	4.20**
Error	79	127.47	

PRD Socioemotional

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	248.97	5.40**
Sex of Child (S)	1	3.25	.07
E X S	1	53.69	1.16
Error	79	46.08	

PRD Power

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	189.76	3.18*
Sex of Child (S)	1	42.56	.71
E X S	1	268.98	4.52**
Error	79	59.50	

*p < .10
**p < .05
***p < .01
****p < .001

Table 11

Analysis of Variance - Parental Role Differentiation Scores for Fathers

PRD Functions

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	745.45	5.87**
Sex of Child (S)	1	59.14	.46
E X S	1	323.52	2.54
Error	79	126.88	

PRD Discipline

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	368.32	4.49**
Sex of Child (S)	1	.55	.01
E X S	1	134.37	1.63
Error	79	81.96	

PRD Socioemotional

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	144.69	4.48**
Sex of Child (S)	1	10.84	.33
E X S	1	1.00	.03
Error	79	32.27	

PRD Power

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	137.41	3.84**
Sex of Child (S)	1	46.50	1.30
E X S	1	21.27	.59
Error	79	35.72	

*p < .10
**p < .05
***p < .01
****p < .001

Table 12

Analysis of Variance: Feminist Scores for Fathers

Source of Variance	df	M.S.	F
Maternal Employment Status (E)	1	149.31	1.03
Sex of Child (S)	1	327.72	2.28
E X S	1	1313.68	9.14***
Error	79	143.65	

*p < .10
**p < .05
***p < .01
****p < .001

Table 13

Correlation Coefficients between Maternal and Child Variables

	Group 1 Sons of employed mothers & their mothers n = 19 Child			Group 2 Daughters of employed mothers & their mothers n = 25 Child			Group 3 Sons of nonemployed mothers & their mothers n = 19 Child			Group 4 Daughters of nonemploy mothers & their mother n = 20 Child		
Mother	ITSC[a]	FS IQ	BRS	ITSC	FS IQ	BRS	ITSC	FS IQ	BRS	ITSC	FS IQ	BR
Attitude to others' role[b]	-.10	-.21	-.17	.01	-.16	.12	.38	-.05	-.27	.01	.15	.
Fathers' interaction with child	.30	.00	-.30	.07	.18	-.18	.05	.02	-.39	-.03	-.23	.
PRD functions[c]	.21	-.21	.01	.01	.01	-.30	-.02	-.13	-.12	-.21	.30	-.
PRD discipline	.25	-.24	-.06	.48*	.02	-.11	-.30	-.30	-.40	.01	.17	.
PRD socioemotional	.03	-.26	-.11	-.05	-.19	-.12	-.13	-.11	.26	.07	.12	.
PRD power	.31	.02	-.08	.36	-.22	.16	-.42	-.24	.41	.14	.05	.
Feminism	-.05	.58**	.26	-.26	.28	.05	.35	-.21	-.16	-.24	.11	-.
Overprotection	-.30	-.32	.12	-.03	-.02	-.24	-.38	.14	.35	-.47*	-.40	.
Manifest rejection	-.11	-.33	-.28	.06	-.41*	-.14	-.39	-.20	.31	.03	-.19	-.
Achievement pressure	-.37	-.50*	.09	-.11	-.31	.01	-.33	-.05	.30	-.07	-.11	-.
Age	.05	.40	.05	.02	.35	-.52**	.09	.32	-.27	-.41	.19	-.
Education	-.25	.06	.28	-.32	-.04	.28	.26	.08	-.18	.22	.37	.
Length of maternal employment	.06	.03	-.02	-.42*	-.22	-.56**						

[a]High scores on the ITSC indicate masculine choices.

[b]High scores on this measure indicate dissatisfaction with mothers' role.

[c]High scores on the PRD scales indicate greater differentiation in parental behaviour.

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

Correlation Coefficents between Paternal and Child Variables

	Group 1 Sons of employed mothers & their fathers n = 19 Child			Group 2 Daughters of employed mothers & their fathers n = 25 Child			Group 3 Sons of nonemployed mothers & their fathers n = 19 Child			Group 4 Daughters of nonemploy mothers & their fathe n = 20 Child		
Father	ITSC[a]	FS IQ	BRS	ITSC	FS IQ	BRS	ITSC	FS IQ	BRS	ITSC	FS IQ	BI
Attitude to mothers' role[b]	-.14	-.50*	.16	.47*	-.31	.10	.01	.21	.03	-.15	.20	
Fathers' Interaction with child	.19	.10	-.02	.23	.13	.33	.01	.19	-.48*	.18	-.53*	
PRD functions[c]	.17	-.17	-.19	-.08	.05	-.01	-.20	-.23	.36	.19	-.13	-.
PRD discipline	.01	-.23	-.17	.48*	.07	.11	-.15	.10	.05	.10	-.18	
PRD socio-emotional	.29	-.36	-.21	-.05	.32	.11	.14	.12	.32	.22	-.25	
PRD power	.07	-.41	-.15	.18	.03	-.19	-.03	.20	-.07	.17	-.28	
Feminism	.16	.49*	-.30	-.28	.26	.51**	.24	.26	-.17	.26	.17	
Overprotection	.01	-.13	-.17	.11	-.17	-.35	-.16	-.12	.12	.10	.19	-.
Manifest rejection	-.27	-.27	-.13	-.13	-.36	-.44*	-.29	-.19	.49*	.05	-.14	-.
Achievement pressure	-.09	-.31	-.21	.18	-.31	-.53**	-.43	-.39	.41	-.13	.13	-.
Age	.31	.32	.01	.20	.03	-.38	.28	.18	-.28	.35	.37	-.
Education	-.33	-.21	-.08	-.41*	.11	.01	.21	.21	-.34	-.60**	.61**	-.

[a]High scores on the ITSC indicate masculine choices.

[b]High scores on this measure indicate dissatisfaction with mothers' role.

[c]High scores on the PRD scales indicate greater differentiation in parental behaviour.

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$